

PLANNING REPORT

☐ **ACTION**

☒ **INFORMATION**

TO: Mayor Dumas and Members of Council
FROM: Anthony Hommik, Senior Planner, Jp2g Consultants Inc. (the Consultant)
DATE: August 16, 2022

RE: Township of South Algonquin Official Plan Review & Update: Special Council Meeting – August 17, 2022

Recommendation: *That Council receive this report for information.*

The Township of South Algonquin retained the services of Jp2g Consultants Inc. to undertake a review and update of its Official Plan (OP) in accordance with Section 26 of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990*. As part of the OP Review and Update, it is a requirement that Council hold a “Special Meeting” open to the public to discuss revisions that may be required or are being considered to the OP and provide the public with an opportunity to submit comments or suggestions for improvements to the existing OP.

This report provides an overview of the nature of the OP Review and Update project, identifies opportunities for public engagement, and presents a preliminary list of issues related to conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) that have been identified by the Consultant to date.

Purpose of South Algonquin’s Official Plan

Pursuant to Section 17 of the *Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990*, Chapter P.13, as amended, The Township of South Algonquin Council is charged with responsibility for preparing and adopting a local OP. The Township of South Algonquin OP was approved by Council in August 2012 and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in February 2014, and contains policies which are designed to manage future growth, development and change within the Township.

The objectives of the OP, as expressed in Section 1.6, are as follows:

- To ensure the preservation of the rural character of the Township.
- To provide cost-effective development and the efficient delivery of services within the Township.
- To stimulate economic development through the sustainable use of the Township’s natural resources, by providing opportunities for future industrial and commercial development, and by encouraging the expansion of the local small business sector.

- To provide levels of service that enable economic development without placing undue strain on the Township's financial resources.
- To accommodate an appropriate range of housing types and densities required to meet projected requirements of current and future residents.
- To accommodate the majority of growth in the two Hamlets of Whitney and Madawaska, where appropriate in terms of servicing and other constraints.
- To accommodate growth in Rural and Waterfront areas.
- To allow residential lot severances within the Hamlet, Rural, and Waterfront areas, as determined in accordance with this plan's policies.
- To create a safe, efficient transportation network within the Township.
- To protect the environment by preserving natural features, ecological systems and natural resources.
- To ensure that all significant cultural heritage resources in the municipality are managed in a manner which perpetuates their functional use while maintaining their heritage value, integrity and benefit to the community.
- To protect people and property from environmental hazards that create risk to health and safety.
- To ensure that decisions of Council have regard to provincial interests as defined in Section 2 of the Planning Act.

Requirement to Review & Update Official Plans

Section 26 of the *Planning Act, R.S.O 1990* requires that Council review and update its OP no less frequently than 10 years after it comes into effect, and every five years after that. As noted above, the Township's current OP was approved by Council in August 2012 and approved by the MMAH in February 2014. The PPS underwent a significant update in 2020 and now is an appropriate time for the Council to initiate the OP review and update at this time.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the OP is:

1. Consistent with Provincial Plans;
2. Has regard for matters of provincial interest; and
3. Is consistent with the PPS; and

It is worth noting that there are no provincial plans in place that affect The Township of South Algonquin. The intent of the OP Review and Update is to modify the OP to be consistent with the current PPS. By doing so, the assumption is that the South Algonquin OP will have regard for matters of provincial interest. It is also important to note that there is no upper tier OP with which the South Algonquin OP must conform; it will be reviewed and ultimately approved by the MMAH.

The OP Review and Update process also provides Council with an opportunity to update its OP so that it is current and continues to reflect the Township's growth and development goals.

Agency Consultation

As part of the OP Review process, there is a requirement to consult with the approval authority and with the prescribed public bodies with respect to the revisions that may be required. The approval authority for the Township of South Algonquin OP is the MMAH.

With the assistance of Township staff, the Consultant has scheduled a pre-consultation meeting with the MMAH on August 24. Over 10 partner ministries, including the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry Services; the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; the Ministry of Transportation; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, have been invited to attend this meeting. Township staff have also reached out to the Algonquins of Ontario, including the local band office with respect to the OP Update. Other agencies, such as local area school boards, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, neighbouring municipalities and utilities will also be engaged in due course. These agencies and rightsholders are to be provided with a notice of commencement of the OP Review and Update project and Council's desire to bring the OP into compliance with the PPS. They are formally requested to participate in the Township of South Algonquin OP Review and Update project. Specifically, they are asked to provide any information that would assist with updating the resource mapping (in GIS format) and any technical information or policy examples to bring the OP into compliance with the PPS.

Township Staff & Council Consultation

The Consultant will be scheduling interviews with senior municipal staff and members of Council to solicit their opinions on elements of the OP that should be updated or revised. The results of this consultation will be reflected in the "Township of South Algonquin OP Review Issues and Options Report" to be presented to Council on September 7, 2022.

Public Consultation

The August 17, 2022 Special Council Meeting is a prescribed requirement under the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990*, intended to formally introduce the OP Review and Update project to ratepayers and provide them with the opportunity to submit comments for consideration by Council. A second 'special meeting' will also take place on August 18, 2022, for those residents interesting in attending the prescribed Special Council Meeting, but unable to attend on August 17. Although written or oral comments are encouraged at the Special Council Meeting (and second special meeting) written comments from members of the public may be submitted to Township staff or the Consultant no later than August 26, 2022, so that they may be captured in the "Township of South Algonquin OP Review Issues and Options Report" and considered in future Council deliberations on the items to be addressed in the OP Update.

For the OP Review and Update project, the Township has created a special page on its website (<https://www.southalgonquin.ca/official-plan-review/>). This page includes

information including what is an OP, why the Township needs an OP, the requirement to review the OP, public comment submissions, and ways in which the public can get involved in the project.

As the project moves forward, the public will have additional opportunities to provide comments on the future draft OP amendment (OPA) designed to update the Township of South Algonquin OP. Further materials will be posted to the OP Review and Update project web page as they become available.

Preliminary List of Issues

Based on the Consultant's review of the current OP against the PPS, the following preliminary list of issues to be considered in the OP Update has been prepared. It is important to understand this is a preliminary assessment and that the list is intended to be a 'living document'. Comments from the public, ministries and agencies, First Nations, and from staff and Council are expected to add to or modify this list. These issues will be explored in detail in the pending Issues and Options Report.

1. **Engagement with Indigenous Communities** – this is a requirement under the PPS and is not currently addressed in the OP.
2. **Climate Change** acknowledgement is a requirement under the PPS, especially related to sustainable infrastructure, built form and growth management.
3. **Intensification and Redevelopment** is a significant theme in the PPS. For communities with no municipal sewer and water services, it is a challenge to develop realistic policies – the Township should establish policies on **additional residential units** as one option to promote intensification within the rural context. There are concerns with additional residential units being permitted in waterfront areas and the potential for them to be used for short-term rentals. Efforts should be made to determine if there are other intensification and redevelopment opportunities as well as reviewing the current policies to ensure they are working effectively.
4. **Economic Diversification** is promoted in PPS – there is an opportunity to improve and enhance the economic development policies contained in the OP – expanded/more permissive home occupation/industry policies, recognition of agriculture as important economic generator, the significance of tourism and potential for growth, impacts of short-term rentals.
5. **Growth Management** is a central theme of the PPS. There is currently some direction in the OP regarding growth management, but it could be expanded to more clearly identify how and where growth is to be accommodated – efforts should be made to include population projections in the OP. Discussions on development policies related to severances, definition of strip development, subdivision development (and their size), minimum lot sizes, supporting studies

should all be reviewed to ensure they reflect best practices and direction from Council.

6. **Waterfront Development/Redevelopment** represents a significant portion of the Township's development activity. The policies related to waterfront development/redevelopment should be reviewed to ensure they reflect best practices and direction from Council. Specific attention should be paid to the legal non-conforming policies and waterfront development.
7. **Housing** is one of the community building blocks. There are policies related to housing and affordable housing, in particular, but the OP could benefit from detailed policies and reference to programs/reports focused on the affordable housing issue.
8. **Emergency Management** is a new policy theme in the PPS – the current OP does not address emergency management – general policies related to the Township's emergency management program should be considered.
9. **Servicing Policies** should be updated to introduce policies or discussion related to communal servicing and an option to promote intensification, hydrogeological study requirements, and stormwater policies. Private road standards should be reviewed to determine if they reflect current best practices.
10. **Open Space/Parks/Recreation** policies in the OP could be enhanced with acknowledgement of the of public lands and parks (Algonquin Park especially) in the Township, expanded recreational trail policies which reference active transportation, and policies related to public access to water resources.
11. **Hazard lands** policies related to prohibited uses, permitted development and site alteration and to direct development away from hazards should be reviewed to determine if they reflect current best practices. Efforts should be made to ensure the hazard land mapping is the most accurate available. There is also a need for policy and mapping specific to wildfire hazards which is a new PPS theme.
12. **Natural Heritage Resources** – is a major theme in the PPS. The current OP has good policies to acknowledge and protect various natural heritage features but the mapping needs improvement to more accurately reflect the Township's natural features.
13. **Resource Mapping** related to agricultural lands and mineral aggregate resources should be reviewed to ensure they reflect the most recent information from the Province and are effective in protecting the identified resources.

14. **General Housekeeping** changes are common with OP updates. References to various government ministries that have been renamed, updated reference documents like the new PPS, new municipal studies and documents are all recommended to be updated to the appropriate current reference.

Next Steps

The formal public consultation on the OP Review is proposed to conclude **August 26, 2022**. Following this, Council will be presented with an Issues and Options Report from the Consultant, summarizing the OP Review component of the project. Council will then determine the issues to be included in the OP Update and provide direction on the preferred policy option to address the issue. Once the scope and nature of the Update has been determined, the Consultant will conduct the necessary research and prepare a draft OPA and Planning Justification Report for Council's consideration.

When Council is satisfied with the draft OPA, the Consultant will initiate the formal OPA process, including additional agency and public consultation, including an Open House and Public Meeting.

Once Council has heard from the agencies and public on the draft OPA, they will determine whether the draft OPA requires further changes or modifications to address comments received. When Council is satisfied with the OPA, they will formally adopt the OPA and forward the document to the MMAH for final approval.

While the formal public consultation process is proposed to conclude on August 26, 2022, opportunities for public comment and engagement are available throughout the OPA process.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Jp2g Consultants Inc.
Engineers • Planners • Project Managers



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